

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2005

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WASHINGTON - Please join the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) for an on-the-record briefing with one of Iraq's most prominent politicians, Mithal al-Alusi. Mr. al-Alusi, who hails from one of the prominent Sunni Arab families of Iraq, was appointed Director General of the Education and Media Section of Iraq's Higher National Commission for De-Ba'athification set up in March 2004. He has publicly sought to break the political taboo against normalization of relations between Iraq and Israel, and was expelled from the Iraqi National Congress for these activities.

Mr. al-Alusi established the Democratic Party of the Iraqi Nation as a secular, liberal, democratic party that sought to overcome sectarian politics and openly challenge countries such as Syria and Iran for interfering in Iraqi affairs. Mr. al-Alusi has been the target of several assassination attempts by groups affiliated with the Ba'athists and al Qaeda, and a few days after the elections in Iraq, his only two sons Ayman and Jamal, were killed a short distance from the al-Alusi resident.

Mr. al-Alusi will discuss the election results in Iraq and the forthcoming constitutional negotiations, especially as related to freedom of religion and Islam.

WHO: Mithal al-Alusi

WHEN: Tuesday, March 1, 2005, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

800 North Capitol St. NW, Suite #790

Washington, DC 20002

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**The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Preeta D. Bansal  
- Felice D. Gaer

